



General Management Plan News

General Management Plan Preliminary Alternatives

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Friends

Fort Matanzas National Monument is seeking public comments and suggestions on four preliminary management concepts for long-term resource protection and visitor services.

These alternatives are not final. They are being made available to our neighbors, stakeholders, and the general public so that the National Park Service can benefit from your review and comment prior to the development and distribution of the draft General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

*Please tell us what you think. Use the enclosed response card to provide us with your comments. No postage is necessary. Simply fold and staple or tape closed the completed card and drop it in a mailbox. We would appreciate your comments by **June 1, 2008** to be considered in this phase of the planning project.*

There will be additional opportunities to comment on the alternatives later in the planning process. Your comments on these preliminary management alternatives will help us revise them for the draft GMP/EIS that will be made available to the public and distributed for additional review and comment. We look forward to hearing from you.

Gordie Wilson

About Fort Matanzas

Fort Matanzas National Monument consists of 298 acres located on Rattlesnake Island and Anastasia Island in St. Johns County, Florida. These two islands lie along the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and the Matanzas estuary, about 14 miles south of St. Augustine. The story of Fort Matanzas has always been closely linked with St. Augustine and the Castillo de San Marcos, which served as the city's chief defensive structure for many years. The National Monument preserves and interprets the 1742 fortified watchtower on Rattlesnake Island as well as natural resources rich in wildlife and recreational opportunities on both islands.

The Plan's Purpose

The purpose of the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS) is to establish basic principles, goals, and objectives for managing the National Monument for the next 15 to 20 years. General management plans represent the broadest level of planning conducted by the National Park Service (NPS) and provide guidance for making informed decisions about the future of park resource conditions and visitor experiences.

The GMP (1) defines the desired natural and cultural resource conditions to be achieved and maintained over time; (2) defines the necessary conditions for visitors to understand, enjoy, and appreciate the park's significant resources; (3) identifies the kinds and levels of management activities, visitor use, and development that are appropriate for maintaining the desired conditions; and (4) identifies indicators and standards for maintaining the desired conditions.

Public Meeting Schedule

We would like to invite you to attend either of the open house meetings listed below so the NPS can obtain your comments and suggestions and answer any questions you might have.

Location:

St. Augustine Beach City Hall
2200 Highway A1A South
City Commission Meeting Room

The meeting schedule is as follows:

March 19, 2008 3:00-7:00 pm

March 20, 2008 3:00-7:00 pm

Each open house session will feature a brief slide presentation at 3:30 pm and 5:30 pm.

In September of 2007, the NPS conducted public meetings to identify issues and to solicit public input on the park's future. Based on these meetings the planning team developed a preliminary set of management alternatives. This newsletter presents a summary of the principal features of each alternative as well as maps showing each respective management zone configuration. The alternatives are not final. They are being presented to you so that the NPS can benefit from your review and comment.

Please tell us what you think. Attend the public meetings or use the enclosed response card to provide us with your comments. No postage is necessary. Simply drop the completed card in the mail. We would appreciate receiving your comments by June 1, 2008.

Planning Issues

The key issues identified during the scoping process were: 1) Adequacy of the existing 1940 visitor center to provide a meaningful orientation and experience given huge growth in the regional population and park visitation since then; 2) Should the number of parking spaces at Fort Matanzas be expanded? and 3) Should driving on the Anastasia Island beaches of the national



Fort Matanzas

monument be allowed to continue?

In the 1960s beachfront property was donated to Fort Matanzas National Monument. Since the early 20th century driving has taken place on the donated beach tracts and it has continued under NPS ownership. Recently attorneys for the NPS advised the Fort Matanzas staff that the park has no authority to permit driving on the NPS sections of the beach on Anastasia Island. As part of the management planning process the NPS will consider preservation of park

resources as well as public comment in selecting the preferred management alternative. If the preferred management alternative includes driving on a portion of the NPS- managed beach, the NPS would pursue a legislative initiative to permit it. Any

permitted driving would be supported by scientific data that insures that driving would have no adverse impact on park natural resources and processes.

The issues helped the team to develop proposed management zones. Each zone specifies a particular combination of future resource conditions, visitor experiences, and management approaches. Zones also determine the types and levels of visitor activities and facility development that may be appropriate. The planning team developed five zones (described below) that could be appropriate for the future management of the National Monument: *Park Services Zone*, *Visitor Services Zone*, *Historic Resource Zone*, *Natural Resource Zone*, and *Recreation Zone*.

Management Zones

On the maps for each alternative the zones appear in different colors corresponding to the colored bar under the name of each zone below.



A/V Room in Visitor Center

Park Services Zone

The *Park Services Zone* provides for administrative offices and maintenance facilities.

Visitor Services Zone

The *Visitor Services Zone* provides for principal visitor access to the National Monument, parking, restrooms, and orientation to and information about the park.

Historic Resource Zone

The *Historic Resource Zone* encompasses areas where the principal cultural resources of the park are found. Visitors would have opportunities for access and education provided through guided tours.

Natural Resource Zone

The *Natural Resource Zone* would emphasize the management of natural resources for preservation

by minimal interference with natural forces and ecosystem succession. No buildings, comfort stations or other structures would be found in this zone. However primitive trails, boardwalks, and interpretive markers would be possible in less environmentally sensitive areas.

Recreation Zone

The *Recreation Zone* provides the opportunities and facilities for visitors to interact with the natural resources of the site. Natural conditions and processes would predominate with some adaptations for visitor use permitted.

The table on the next page shows examples of visitor activities and development that could be appropriate for each zone.

Preliminary Alternatives

The NPS planning process requires a range of alternative future conditions and management. The preliminary alternatives for the National Monument were developed by arranging the management zones in different



Fort Matanzas NM – Anastasia Island

configurations. The NPS has developed three alternatives, in addition to Alternative A, the no-action alternative, to guide the park for the next 15 to 20 years.

Alternative A

Alternative A is the no action alternative, in which current management practices and trends continue. This alternative is used as a way to evaluate the effects of the other alternatives and is also useful in understanding why the NPS or the public believe that changes are necessary. Alternative A reflects existing conditions, therefore, it is not zoned. Zoning maps display desired future conditions and are provided for Alternatives B, C, and D.



Fort Matanzas NM – Beach Goers at Southern Tip of Anastasia Island

- Alternative A would continue current management policies and practices into the foreseeable future. However, driving off of established park roads (i.e. the Anastasia Island beaches) will be

prohibited in accord with existing legal authorities, Presidential Executive Orders, and NPS policy.

- Current natural and cultural resource management practices,

enforcement, compliance, administrative and staffing practices and levels would continue.

- Current levels of facilities and development would continue.

Appropriate Visitor Activities and Development by Zone

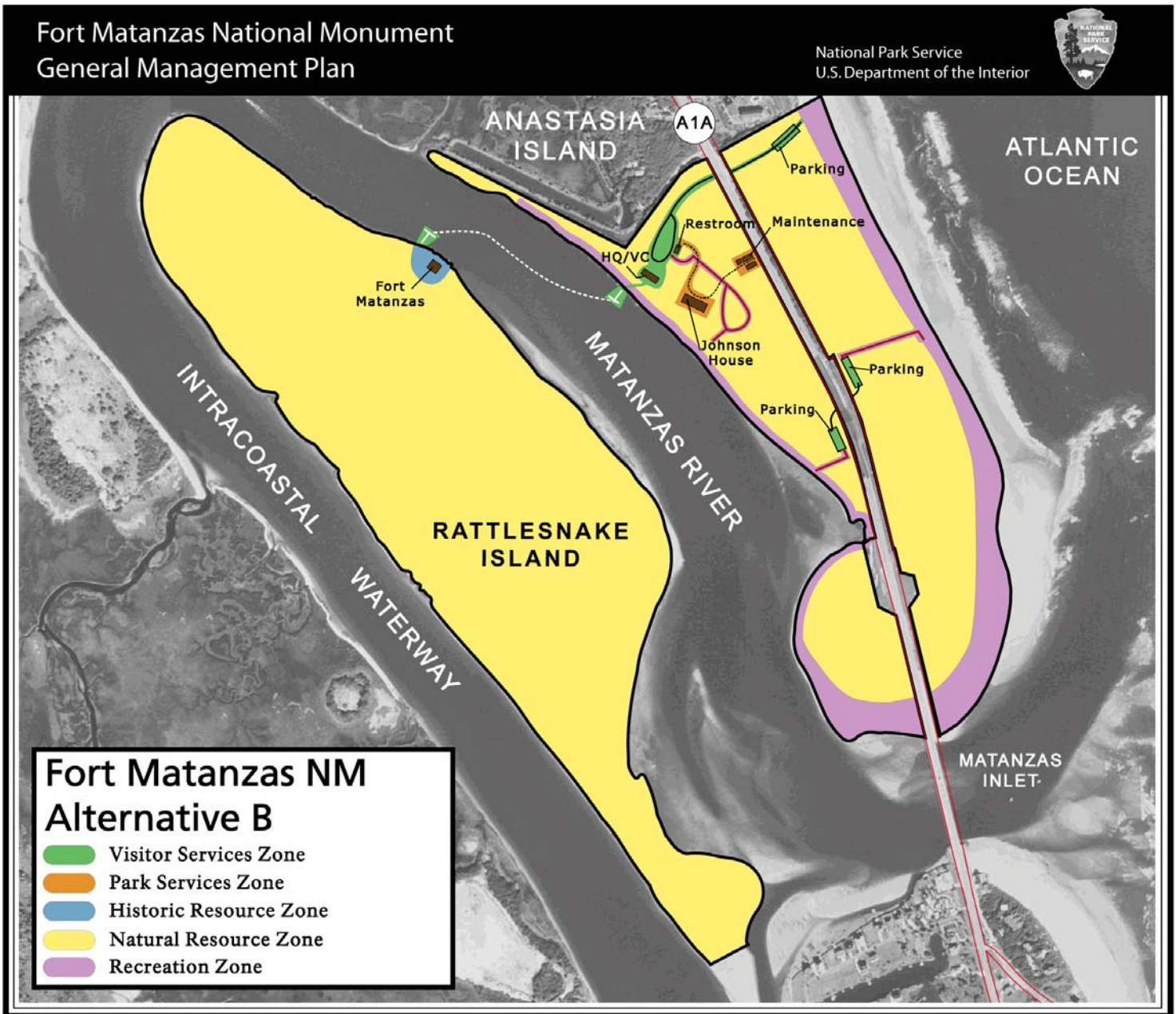
	Visitor Services Zone	Park Services Zone	Historic Resource Zone	Natural Resource Zone	Recreation Zone
TYPES OF VISITOR ACTIVITIES					
Beach Driving					X (Overlay Only)
Cycling	X				X
Dog walking (on leash)	X			X	X
Fishing	X	X		X	X
Group interpretation	X		X	X	X
Guided tours (incl. boat to fort)	X		X	X	X
Hiking				X	X
Picnicking	X			X	X
Scientific research (by permit)	X	X	X	X	X
TYPES OF FACILITIES AND DEVELOPMENT					
Boardwalks	X	X	X	X	X
Comfort station (restrooms)	X	X			
Headquarters/Admin. Areas	X	X			
Maintenance buildings		X			
Parking lots (Paved)	X	X			
Parking lots (Unpaved)		X			
Picnic pavilion	X				
Picnic tables	X				
Roads (Paved)	X	X			
Roads (Unpaved)	X	X			
Trails (Natural-surfaced)			X	X	X
Trails (Hardened)	X	X	X		
Vault/pit toilets	X	X			
Visitor center	X				
Visitor contact station	X				
Wayside exhibits	X		X	X	X

Alternative B

This concept envisions managing the National Monument in tune with its history as a small military outpost within a sometimes harsh, but beautiful and rich natural environment. Interpretation and preservation of the natural

environment would be emphasized. The zoning map of Alternative B follows.

- There would be minimal development of new facilities or modification of the natural environment.
- Low impact recreational activities would be emphasized.
- As in Alternative A, driving off of established park roads will be prohibited in accord with existing legal authorities, Presidential Executive Orders, and NPS policy.



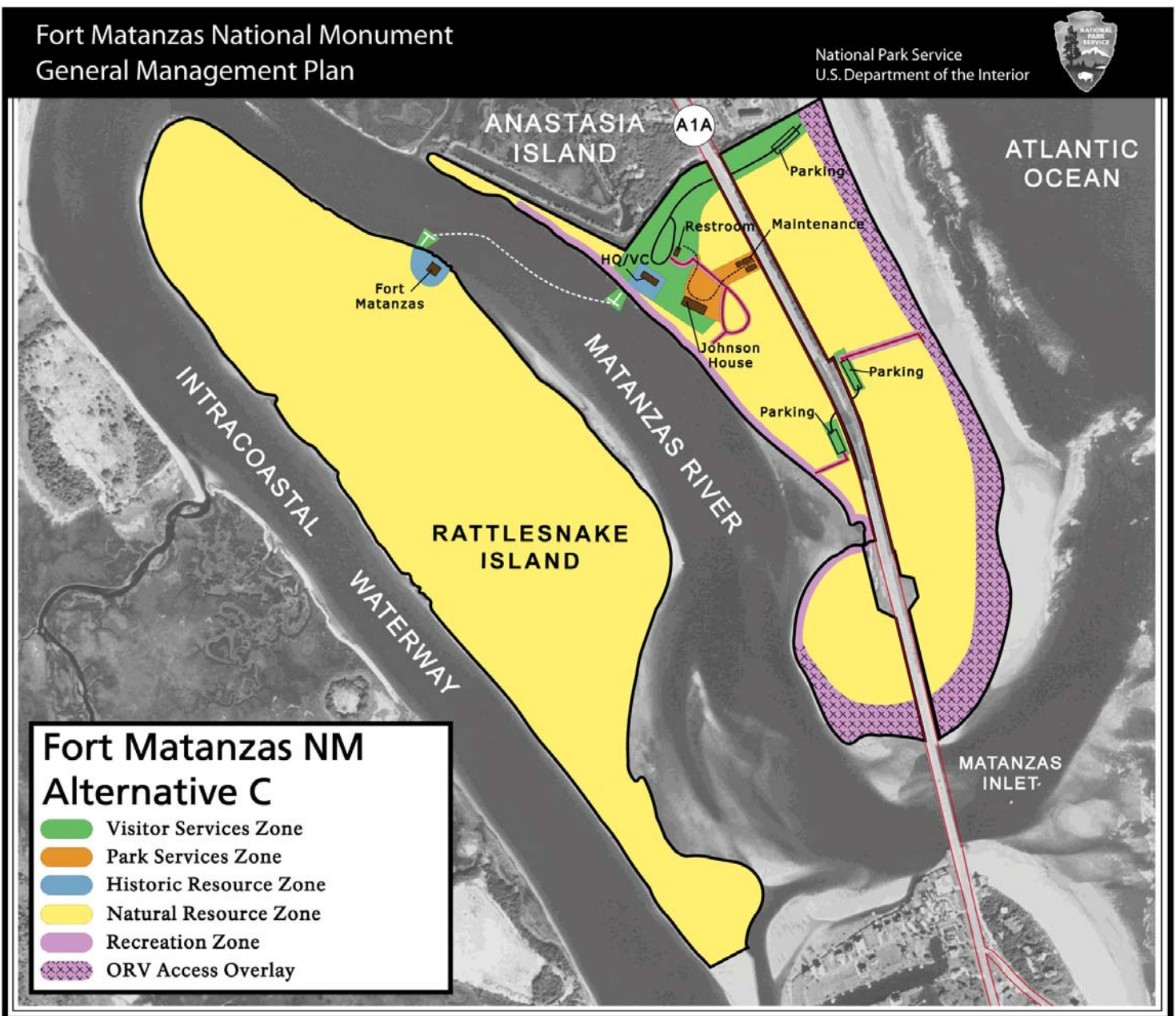
Alternative C

This vision of Fort Matanzas combines the history of the Rattlesnake Island fortified outpost with its establishment as a National Monument and the further development and evolution of the park to its present day configuration. The zoning map of Alternative C follows.

- The north end of the Anastasia Island section of the park west of Highway A1A would be preserved as an exhibit that commemorates the efforts of the WPA and local citizens to create a permanent monument to the Spanish history of the site.
- The existing WPA era visitor center would be preserved as an historic structure and not used as a visitor center. A new full service visitor

center would be constructed – location to be determined.

- Visitors may continue to have vehicle access on the beach if authorized by Congress and if the environmental analysis of the Off Road Vehicle Plan demonstrates no impairment of resources.



Alternative D

This alternative accommodates the increasing demand for outdoor recreation opportunities in the region by expanding access for low- impact, passive recreational uses. The zoning map of Alternative D follows.

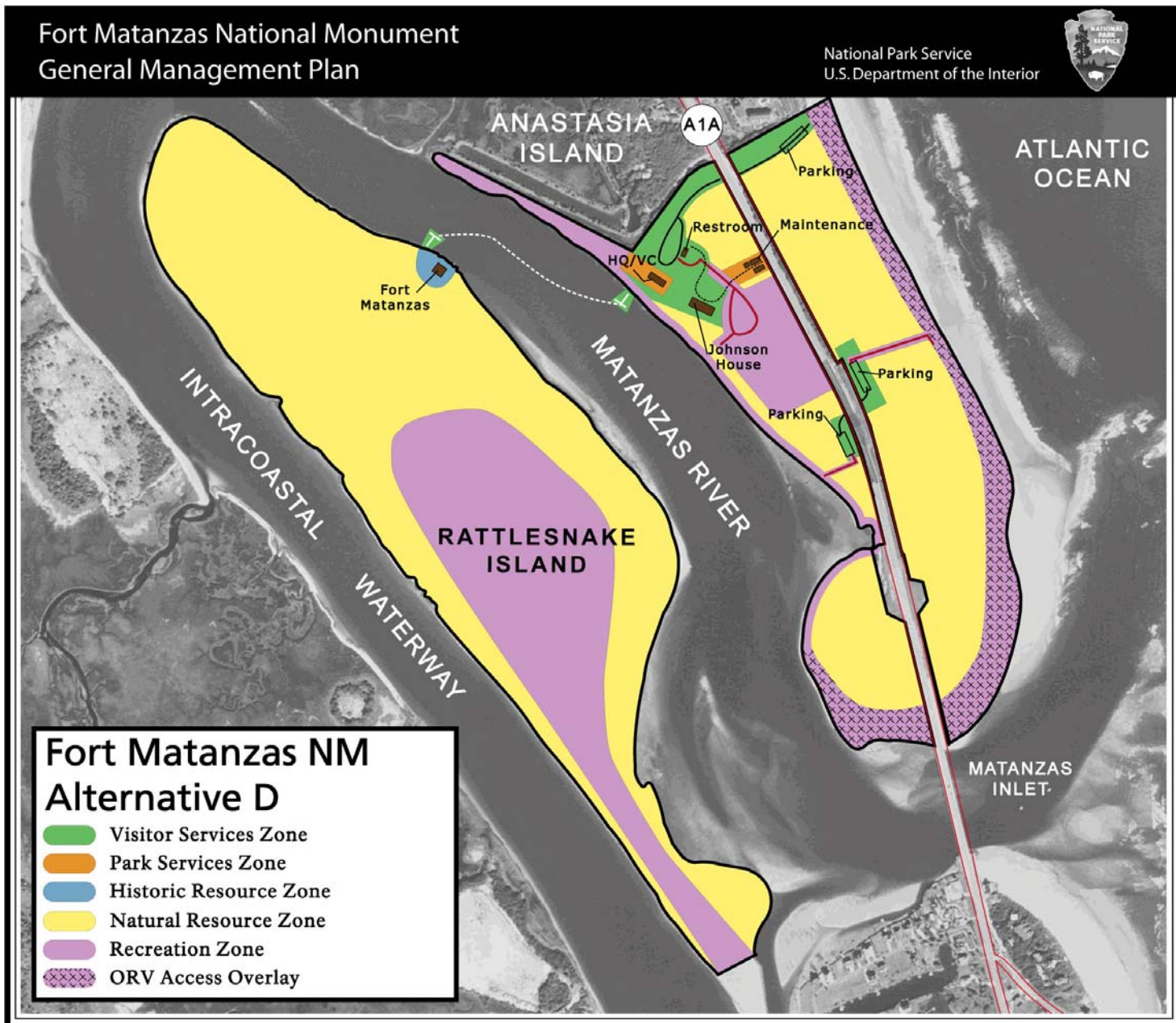
- There would be enhanced pedestrian access and resource

discovery opportunities on the west side of A1A and Rattlesnake Island.

- The WPA- built structure would become administrative offices for the park.
- A new full- service visitor center would be built on a previously disturbed site. The current WPA visitor center would be converted to

administrative offices for the National Monument.

- Visitors may continue to have vehicle access on the beach if authorized by Congress and if the environmental analysis of the Off Road Vehicle Plan demonstrates no impairment of resources





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Matanzas NM GMP

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Contacts

The National Park Service appreciates your input into this planning process and would like your feedback. You may provide your comments at the public meetings, through the internet (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>). Under "Choose a Park" click on "Fort Matanzas NM" and follow the link to the GMP), or by mail using the following contact information:

National Park Service
Fort Matanzas NM GMP
SERO – David Libman
100 Alabama ST SW
1924 Building
Atlanta GA 30303-9725



Fort Matanzas Tour Boat